

THE SPECIAL SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS: Creating Opportunity for All

In January 2004, the democratic heads of state and government of our hemisphere gathered for a Special Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, to address economic and political developments in the region. Fourteen of 34 leaders had taken office since the April 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, Canada; economic growth in the region had slowed; and security concerns had deepened with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Leaders agreed to reaffirm the broad hemispheric consensus on strengthening democracy, opening markets, and enhancing security, and to take steps to deal with new challenges.

At the Special Summit, leaders developed a focused, cooperative framework for hemispheric progress. They agreed to foster economic growth and reduce poverty by opening their economies to trade and investment and by deepening institutional and microeconomic reforms. They recognized the need to increase accountability in education and to strengthen their response to HIV/AIDS. And they pledged to fight corruption and promote transparency. Leaders pledged to take concrete actions on each of these commitments by specific dates, and to ensure that those actions have real impact on people's lives.

The Special Summit of the Americas set an ambitious agenda for our hemisphere. Bilaterally and through multilateral organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States, the United States partners with other countries in the region to advance this agenda, sharing ideas, technical expertise, and best practices. Governments are helping create opportunities for all through sustained cooperation toward our common goals.



U.S. President George W. Bush and President Vicente Fox of Mexico at a press conference during the Special Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, January 12-13, 2004. (AP/WWP)

U.S. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE HEMISPHERE'S AGENDA

- The U.S. is implementing the three **Special Summit** pillars: Growth with Equity to Reduce Poverty, Investing in People, and Democratic Governance.
- To **foster economic growth and reduce poverty**, the U.S. is cooperating with hemispheric neighbors to reduce the time and cost of starting a business, strengthen property rights, lower the cost of remittance transfers, and expand access to capital for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- The U.S. **promotes social development** and investment in people by creating report cards on our educational systems and by increasing access to HIV/AIDS antiretroviral therapy.
- To **strengthen democratic governance**, the U.S. is committed to denying safe haven to corrupt officials, those who corrupt them, and their assets, and to strengthening the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and its Follow-Up Mechanism.